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Your

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

How it serves people on the

**FARM and in the
COMMUNITY
NATION
WORLD**



Your

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Its Broad Responsibilities

Your U. S. Department of Agriculture serves all Americans daily. It works to improve and maintain farm income and to develop and expand markets abroad for agricultural products. The Department helps to curb and cure poverty, hunger, and malnutrition. It works to enhance the environment and to maintain our capacity to produce by helping landowners to protect soil, water, forests, and other natural resources. Department programs in the fields of rural development, credit, and conservation are key resources in carrying out national growth policies. Its research findings are of direct or indirect benefit to all Americans. The Department, through inspection and grading services, safeguards and assures standards of quality in the daily food supply.

This pamphlet summarizes the work of the Department of Agriculture.

How It Started

Abraham Lincoln signed the congressional act creating the U. S. Department of Agriculture in 1862. A little more than a quarter century later, Agriculture became the eighth executive department to achieve Cabinet rank. In those early days, the Department served a population most of whom were engaged in agriculture as a livelihood. A farmer in Lincoln's time produced only enough farm products to supply himself and three or four others.

Today's Department serves a Nation in which only 5 percent of the population lives on farms--a Nation in which each agricultural worker provides food and fiber for himself and 44 others.

Relationship to Land-Grant Colleges

In 1862 Congress passed, and President Lincoln signed, the Land-Grant College Act. This act donated 11 million acres of public lands to the States and Territories to provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanical arts.

This act was followed by others to strengthen the experimental and extension activities of the States.

In 1887 Congress authorized an agricultural experiment station in each State and Territory.

In 1914 it established the Cooperative Extension Service for each State to extend agricultural and home economics research information of the Department and land-grant colleges to farmers and other people.

ACTIVITIES OF USDA

Research

USDA works closely on research with State experiment stations, State departments of agriculture, schools of forestry, farmer cooperatives, and other public and private agencies. It administers Federal grant funds voted for the States by Congress.

The Agricultural Research Service carries out research on crops, livestock, soil and water conservation, agricultural engineering, control of insects and other pests, human nutrition, and home economics. ARS also develops new and expanded uses for farm commodities; conducts and administers a research program using the physical and biological sciences to solve problems of market quality, transportation, and facilities; and conducts control and regulatory programs, including plant and animal quarantines and animal disease eradication campaigns.

The Cooperative State Research Service administers (under the Hatch Act of 1955 and the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act of 1962) Federal-grant payments for research at the agricultural experiment stations and eligible

schools of forestry. CSRS also assists State experiment stations and USDA agencies in planning and coordinating scientific research programs.

The Economic Research Service does research in general economic and statistical analysis, marketing economics, farm and resource economics, and foreign economic analysis.

The Farmer Cooperative Service conducts economic research to help farmers market their products and purchase supplies. It also helps all rural people to obtain other business services through cooperatives.

The Farmer Cooperative Service reaches farmers and other rural people by conducting educational work to help them improve the effectiveness of their cooperatives. In these activities it cooperates with land-grant colleges, State extension offices and county agents, and with cooperatives and their State and national organizations.

The Forest Service carries on a broad research program through its eight regional forest experiment stations, the Forest Products Laboratory, and the Institute of Tropical Forestry. In these laboratories scientists study the establishment, improvement, growth, and harvesting of timber; protection of forests from fire, insects, diseases, and animal pests; management of rangelands; improvement and management of wildlife habitat; forest recreation; protection and management of watersheds; efficient marketing and utilization of forest products; forest engineering; forest genetics; and forest economics. A continuing forest survey provides comprehensive information on the extent and condition of forest lands, the volume and quality of timber resources, trends in timber growth and harvest, and the outlook for future supplies and demands.

Education

The Cooperative Extension Service is the field educational arm of the Department of Agriculture and land-grant universities and colleges. Federal,

State, and local governments jointly sponsor and finance its work. The Extension Service staff represents USDA in this activity.

In nearly all counties, Extension workers conduct educational programs to help families learn about and apply new research findings and technological developments to the everyday problems of living and making a living. The major areas included in the educational efforts are efficient production and marketing of agricultural products; improved family living, including nutrition; 4-H youth development; and rural development.

The National Agricultural Library, Beltsville, Maryland (intersection of I-495 and U. S. 1 at Exit 27, North) contains 1.3 million volumes on agriculture; biology, chemistry, and other subjects supporting agricultural research. Probably the most extensive agricultural library in existence, it collects and maintains worldwide publications in the agricultural, biological, and chemical sciences; serves the research, extension, regulatory, and other programs of the USDA and State agricultural agencies; extends services to other libraries, institutions, and the public; and provides, at cost, microfilm and photocopy of material in the collection.

Information

Each USDA agency provides information on its work for farmers, consumers, and others. The Office of Information coordinates:

Publications, technical and popular, which present research results and program, regulatory, and other information on the work of USDA.

Current information, which includes press, radio, and television materials and special reports.

Visuals, which include exhibits, photos, graphics, and motion pictures.

Marketing and Consumer Services

The Commodity Exchange Authority keeps watch on and investigates traders' and brokers'

operations on commodity exchanges to prevent price manipulation and fraud and to safeguard producer and consumer interests in pricing and marketing services of exchanges.

The Consumer and Marketing Service services, regulates, improves, and protects the marketing system--to help move our supply of food and other farm products from producer to consumer quickly and efficiently, with fairness to all.

C&MS protects consumers by inspecting meat and poultry and by providing inspection services for other foods and farm products.

It grades food and farm products, to help consumers and marketers to buy efficiently, and provides market news services, to help them make intelligent marketing decisions.

Its regulatory duties include administering such laws as the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act, the U. S. Warehouse Act, the Federal Seed Act, and marketing agreements and orders.

And C&MS strives to improve the system further by issuing marketing guides, seeking surplus removal outlets, aiding individual States through the matching fund program, and helping to provide efficient transportation services at reasonable rates.

The Food and Nutrition Service leads the Nation's effort to wipe out hunger and malnutrition. Its Food Stamp and Commodity Distribution Programs help provide food to poor families, both through the regular food marketing system and through a direct distribution system. Its Child Nutrition Programs help to feed children through the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfasts, Special Milk, and other child-feeding activities in preschool centers and summer programs. When hurricanes and other natural disasters strike, resources of all these FNS programs are quickly adapted to aid its victims.

USDA's Packers and Stockyards Administration, which administers the Packers and Stockyards Act, helps to maintain free and open competition in the marketing of the Nation's livestock, poultry, and meat production.

The P&S Act prohibits unfair, deceptive, discriminatory, and monopolistic marketing

practices which would deprive the farmer of a fair price for his product and the marketer of a reasonable profit for his services, and unduly affect consumer prices for meat and poultry.

Trade and Aid

The **Foreign Agricultural Service** administers USDA foreign programs in the interest of U. S. agriculture, with special emphasis on market promotion abroad. Attaches at 60 foreign posts maintain a constant flow of world agricultural information.

The **Export Marketing Service** is charged with increasing U. S. farm exports. It accomplishes its mission by export credit sales through Commodity Credit Corporation, private trade credit sales and Government-to-Government credit sales under P. L. 480; by barter; and by the handling of commodity sales through regular commercial channels. Export payment assistance is provided to bring export prices on certain commodities such as wheat and rice within competitive ranges.

The **Foreign Economic Development Service** coordinates the Department's participation in overseas technical assistance programs. Its work includes sending agricultural technicians abroad and training foreign specialists in the United States. This work is sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development.

Economics

The **Economic Research Service** analyzes factors affecting farm production, prices and income, and the outlook for various commodities. It studies production efficiency, marketing costs and potentials, rural development and agricultural trade, production, and Government policies.

The **Statistical Reporting Service** reports on crop and livestock production and prices paid and received by farmers, conducts surveys of consumer purchases and attitudes, and keeps statistical methods used by USDA accurate and responsive to changing needs.

Soil, Water, and Forest Conservation

The Soil Conservation Service develops and carries out a national soil and water conservation program through 3,000 soil and water conservation districts--districts with 2.2 million cooperating landowners and farm operators. This agency also provides USDA leadership for: Watershed protection projects, the Great Plains conservation program, resource conservation and development, income-producing recreation enterprises, river basin investigations, and the National Inventory of Soil and Water Conservation Needs. In addition, SCS administers the Federal part of the National Cooperative Soil Survey and makes and coordinates snow surveys for water supply forecasting in the Western States. The SCS also gives technical help in support of the national agricultural conservation program. In recent years the services of SCS specialists have been used more and more by State, county and local governments, planning and zoning agencies, and other institutions and organizations in rapidly developing areas to insure proper land and water management. These services take the form of assistance to nonfarm groups in such activities as the provision of municipal and industrial water supply, highway construction, housing developments, recreation facilities, school site development, and strip-mine reclamation.

The Forest Service is another USDA agency primarily concerned with protection and development of our natural resources. The Forest Service administers 154 national forests and 19 national grasslands containing 186 million acres in 41 States and Puerto Rico. These lands are managed for multiple use and sustained yield of all the renewable natural resources including timber, water, forage, special products, fish and wildlife, natural beauty, and outdoor recreation.

Besides this the Forest Service cooperates with State agencies and private forest owners (1) to protect the 450 million acres of State and privately owned forests and critical watersheds against fire, insects, and diseases, (2) to encourage better forest

practices for multiple use and profit on the 367 million acres of private forest land, (3) to aid in production and distribution of planting stock for forest and shelterbelt planting, (4) to provide technical assistance in utilization and marketing of forest products, and (5) to stimulate proper management of State, county, and community forests.

Stabilization

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service is responsible for administering--

- * Acreage allotments and marketing quotas, when applicable under law to certain major crops, to help keep supplies in line with demand.

- * Programs to maintain balanced production of wheat, and of feed grains, by providing to cooperators price-support loans and payments or wheat marketing certificates, and payments for diverting acreage to conservation use when supplies are excessive.

- * The cotton program to avoid surplus through domestic acreage allotments, price-support loans and payments, and payments for diverting cotton acreage to conservation use when necessary.

- * Price supports for various other commodities specified by law, and the management of commodity inventories.

- * The Sugar Act and the National Wool Act.

- * Programs to help obtain adequate farm and commercial storage for farm products.

- * The Cropland Adjustment Program to shift land, through payments under long-term agreements, from crops in plentiful supply to a conservation use. To the extent of appropriations, CAP's Greenspan provision helps State and local government agencies acquire such cropland for nonfarm, public benefit uses with payments on the same basis as those to farmers.

- * The national agricultural conservation program that shares the costs of establishing approved soil and water conserving practices.

- * Programs to assist farmers in designated

areas during natural disasters and other emergencies.

The ASCS also assists the Export Marketing Service in foreign sales, donations and barter of commodities under Public Law 480, and assists the Food and Nutrition Service in donating commodities through domestic channels.

The Commodity Credit Corporation, with its \$14.5 billion borrowing authority, finances the price-support program, domestic and export surplus commodity disposal, foreign assistance, storage activities, and related programs and operations of the Department.

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation provides farmers with all-risk insurance that repays crop production costs lost because of bad weather, insects, disease, and other unavoidable natural causes. This keeps the rural economy going in those years when drought or other natural disasters cut crop yields and leave farmers with a short crop, or no crop, to sell. FCIC protection is available in more than one-third of the Nation's farm counties. As farming becomes more of a credit operation, Federal Crop Insurance policies are becoming increasingly important as collateral for crop production loans.

Rural Development

USDA provides leadership and support in comprehensive planning and development of rural areas. Each State and most counties have a Rural Development Committee representing the USDA agencies that have primary responsibilities in this area. Representatives of other agencies, State and Federal, often serve on these committees.

The Cooperative Extension Service provides educational and planning assistance to development groups and extends the knowledge and available resources of land-grant universities to assist in solutions to community problems. Other agencies through their representatives provide technical assistance to individuals and to local, district, and State development groups.

To meet their assigned responsibilities in rural

development, Extension and other USDA agencies help rural people and their development groups learn about and use USDA progress and programs of other agencies. Their objectives are to help local people use these programs to create job opportunities through business and industrial expansion; improve housing; provide health facilities; develop public facilities to provide adequate educational, cultural, entertainment, and recreational opportunities; upgrade agriculture; and carry out conservation, beautification, and other projects which strengthen the rural economy.

The Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development and Conservation administers the rural development program within the Department. He serves as chairman of the Departmental Rural Development Committee. The Committee develops policies and programs, sets priorities, and coordinates agency action on matters pertaining to rural development.

The Administrators and Deputy Administrators of the Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, Farmers Home Administration, Extension Service, and Rural Electrification Administration serve on the Departmental Committee along with such others as the Secretary may designate. Other agencies are invited to meet with the Committee from time to time.

The State USDA Committee for Rural Development is composed of representatives of the agencies mentioned above. The State Committees may enlarge their membership at their own discretion, and establish their own operating procedures within Departmental policies.

The State Committee also is charged with deciding on the kind of USDA rural development committee to be established at the area, county, or local levels as needed to give maximum assistance to individuals and organizations in all matters pertaining to rural development.

Credit

Vital financial assistance is provided through

the Farmers Home Administration. This agency strengthens family farms and rural communities through credit accompanied by technical and management assistance.

Funds are advanced for: Meeting farm operating expenses; purchasing, enlarging, and improving family farms; constructing and purchasing rural homes and farm service buildings; developing community water and waste disposal systems; developing farm enterprises and trades and services that raise the incomes and improve the level of living of low-income rural people; developing watersheds; expanding soil and water conservation; shifting land use; providing rental housing for low-income rural people including senior citizens; providing farm labor housing; meeting the emergency credit needs of farmers.

Loans supplement and in no case compete with credit provided by other lenders. There is an FHA office serving every rural county of the United States.

The Rural Electrification Administration makes long term self-liquidating loans to provide initial and continuing electric service in unserved rural areas. Most borrowers are nonprofit, consumer-owned cooperatives.

REA also makes loans to extend and improve telephone service in rural areas. Loans are made to telephone companies and to nonprofit associations.

Emergency Programs

An emergency organization coordinated and directed by an assistant to the Secretary has been set up within USDA at national, State, and county levels to handle both natural disasters and defense programs. Those administering programs to feed people and to help farmers affected by floods, drought, and other natural disasters would use this experience to meet USDA responsibilities in the event of nuclear war. In the national defense program, USDA is responsible for food from farm through the wholesale level for emergency food stockpiling, for radiological monitoring and fire

control in rural areas, and biological and chemical warfare defense for animals and crops.

HOW USDA IS ORGANIZED

SECRETARY

Under Secretary
Staff Assistants

General Counsel

Inspector General

Departmental Administration

Assistant Secretary for Administration

Budget and Finance, Office of

Hearing Examiners, Office of

Information, Office of

Management Improvement,

Office of

Management Services, Office of

Personnel, Office of

Plant and Operations,

Office of

Agricultural Economics

Director

Economic Research Service

Foreign Economic

Development Service

Planning Evaluation and

Programming Staff

Statistical Reporting Service

International Affairs and Commodity Programs

Assistant Secretary

Agricultural Stabilization and
Conservation Service

Commodity Credit Corporation

Export Marketing Service

Federal Crop Insurance
Corporation

Foreign Agricultural Service

Marketing and Consumer Services

Assistant Secretary

Commodity Exchange Authority

Consumer and Marketing Service

Food and Nutrition Service

Packers and Stockyards
Administration

Rural Development and Conservation

Assistant Secretary

Farmer Cooperative Service

Farmers Home Administration

Forest Service

Rural Electrification

Administration

Soil Conservation Service

Science and Education

Director

Agricultural Research Service

Cooperative State Research
Service

Extension Service

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